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In the Claims

Please amend Claims 1, 4, 5, 15, and 19-21. Amendments to the claims are indicated in the attached "Marked Up Version of Amendments" (pages i - ii).

1. (Twice Amended) A method for managing membership of nodes in a computer network cluster, the method comprising:
 - defining a shareable storage device to store data for a network; and
 - always granting membership in a network cluster to a node if the node has access to the shareable storage device.
4. (Twice Amended) A system for managing membership of nodes in a computer network cluster, comprising:
 - a network infrastructure for supporting a plurality of nodes in a network cluster;
 - a storage device separated from the network infrastructure and interconnectable to a plurality of nodes;
 - a node interconnected with the storage device; and
 - a manager mechanism to always grant membership in the network cluster to the node exclusively based on the node having access to the storage device.
5. (Twice Amended) A computer program product for managing membership of nodes in a computer network cluster, the computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable code thereon, including program code that:
 - defines a shareable storage device to store data for a network cluster; and
 - always grant membership in the network cluster to a node if the node has access to the shareable storage device.
15. (Amended) The computer program product of Claim 14 further comprises program code that:
 - ceases operation of the network cluster if no node has access to the shareable storage device.

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19. (Amended) A method for managing membership of nodes in a computer network cluster, the method comprising:
 - defining a shareable storage device to store data for a network;
 - creating a message location on the shareable storage device; and
 - using the message location, always granting membership in a network cluster to a node if the node has access to the shareable storage device.
20. (Amended) A system for managing membership of nodes in a computer network cluster, comprising:
 - a network infrastructure for supporting a plurality of nodes in a network cluster;
 - a storage device separated from the network infrastructure and interconnectable to a plurality of nodes;
 - a message location on the shareable storage device;
 - a node interconnected with the storage device; and
 - a manager mechanism to always grant membership in the network cluster to a node exclusively based on the node having access to the storage device, using the message location.
21. (Amended) A computer program product for managing membership of nodes in a computer network cluster, the computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable code thereon, including program code that:
 - defines a shareable storage device to store data for a network cluster;
 - creates a message location on the shareable storage device; and
 - uses the message location to always grant membership in the network cluster to a node if the node has access to the shareable storage device.

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 4, 5, 19, 20 and 21 are independent claims. All claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) based on U.S. Patent No. 6,363,495 to MacKenzie et al. The Office Action has been made final. The Applicants argue